



“PLACES & SPACES” PROGRAM & ONLINE SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT

February 2011

Summary Report

Prepared by Lura Consulting and Schollen & Company Inc.
for the City of Mississauga

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Credit River Parks Strategy is a project initiated by the City of Mississauga to create a sustainable, innovative and environmentally responsible master plan for the parkland and natural areas along the Credit River over the next 25 years. The strategy will provide a plan to emphasize the Credit River, foster awareness and action around its conservation and offer all-season recreational and cultural activities.

The consultation process for the Credit River Parks Strategy was designed to encourage meaningful feedback from stakeholders and the public, generate awareness of the importance of the Parks Strategy, and educate park users in order to foster long-term stewardship of the Credit River and the adjacent park land.

A range of meetings and activities are included in the study process in order to provide the public, stakeholders groups, First Nations and other government agencies opportunities to provide input to this master planning exercise. This report summarizes the results of two of these consultation activities: the “Places and Spaces” program and the Credit River Parks Strategy Online Survey.

2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The “Places and Spaces” campaign and Online Survey have yielded a comprehensive set of data related to user preferences and values, as well as identifying key issues and opportunities. This information is very valuable to the project team and will inform the next stages of the planning process. The results of these consultation activities demonstrate that nature-based activities and passive recreation are the most common and valued park uses. Walking, hiking, and biking along the trails, picnicking, barbecuing and fishing are among the most popular park uses. In the winter, tobogganing, cross-country skiing and walking the trails are also common. What is most important about the study area according to the greatest number of park users is being able to experience nature so close to an urban setting. Protecting the natural heritage features of the study area and ensuring their viability in the long-term, is therefore of the utmost importance to the public.

The introduction of new activities, cultural elements or entertainment to the park is not widely desired amongst park users; however, there are some people who would like to see additional elements such as community gardens, performances, art installations or cultural events. The concerns among the public about these activities suggest that any new uses to will need to be compatible with the ecology of the study area and/or implemented in conjunction with by proper mitigation and management practices.

According to the majority of participants, new infrastructure and facilities in the Credit River Parks should be limited. It was suggested that there are other locations in Mississauga which are far better suited for facilities such as splash pads and sports fields. Long continuous trails are the key

amenities that are desired by park users. Landscape design, gardens and trails should be kept as natural as possible in the view of most respondents.

Education and engagement was an important theme identified throughout the survey. Participants noted the importance and desirability of educational and engagement programs that will help to establish the connection between people and the natural environment within CRPS site. This finding suggests the need for the Credit River Park Strategy to include a plan for continued outreach, in order to foster long-term community engagement and stewardship.

Participants identified some key issues and concerns about the parks, such as lack of serviced washrooms, the insufficient number of garbage and recycling facilities, vandalism, trash in the park and missing trail connections. Many participants also emphasized the importance of the Credit River itself, both for activities such as fishing and kayaking. They also identified the need to protect the river and to be cautious when promoting increased public access as the valley is fragile.

3 PLACES AND SPACES SUMMARY

3.1 Overview of Approach

“Places and Spaces” is an approach to consultation that involves visiting various places within a community to speak with and obtain feedback from members of the general public. Visiting places in the community where people congregate rather than relying on them to attend public meetings, ensures that a broader demographic of the community is afforded the opportunity to provide feedback and become informed about the Strategy.

Members of the project team for the Credit River Parks Strategy visited 11 community spaces within the City of Mississauga, such as the Hershey Sports Centre, Riverwood, Erindale Park and the Living Arts Centre, in order to consult with residents and park users. At the events, a series of questions were posed to participants about how they use the parks, what are the most important park elements and what they envision for the future. During indoor events, project staff also set up a large map of the study area and encouraged participants to identify issues related to specific locations. The information and feedback received was recorded using feedback forms on clipboards. Promotional cards for the online survey were also distributed during Places and Spaces visits.

3.2 Venues and Dates

A range of locations were selected for the Places and Spaces consultations, based on their capacity to reach a diverse, yet interested and knowledgeable audience. The following is a list of the venues and dates visited.

No.	Event	Location	Date	Time
1	Erindale Park – Trail Hike	Erindale Park	Saturday, December 11, 2010	10:00 – 12:30 am

2	Riverwood Conservancy Park – Trail Hike	Riverwood Park	Saturday, February 5, 2011	1:00– 3:00 pm
3	Hot Chocolate and Wild Birds	The Riverwood Conservancy at MacEwan Field Station	Tuesday, December 21, 2010	8:30-11:00 am
4	Tim Horton’s Public Skate (All Ages)	Hershey Centre Iceland	Wednesday, December 22, 2010	2:45-4:15 pm
5	Student Centre	University of Toronto Mississauga	Thursday January, 13, 2011	2:00-5:00pm
6	Vic Johnson Community Centre, Public Skate	Streetsville Memorial Park, Vic Johnson Community Centre	Sunday, January 16, 2011	1:00-3:30pm
7	Smash The Roof - An All Women Comedy Show	Hammerson Hall - Living Arts Centre	Saturday, January 22, 2011	7:00-9:45 pm
9	Woodhurst Heights Park Outdoor Skating Rink	Woodhurst Heights Park	Saturday, January 29, 2011	10:00am-12:45pm
10.	Tobogganing/Cross-country skiing/Walking at Erindale Park	Erindale Park	Saturday, January 30, 2011	1:00-3:30pm
11	Hershey Centre – Hockey and Skating Parents	Hershey Centre	Saturday, February 5, 2011	9:30 – 12:00

3.3 Key Findings

The following provides a high-level summary of the comments and feedback received from the public during the 11 “Places and Spaces” visits. The comments are grouped into three categories: current park use, park priorities and park improvements.

Current park use:

- walking and hiking on trails are the most common park activities
- picnicking and barbequing are also common; they are often done as a family
- tobogganing is the most popular winter activity in Credit River Parks; walking and cross country skiing are also popular
- cycling along the trails is an important and valued activity for some people
- fishing in both the summer and winter is a valued activity for some participants, especially males
- children often use the park to play games; they also visit the park to see animals and experience nature
- photography and dog-walking are somewhat common in Credit River Parks study area
- students and teenagers do not use the parks as often as older individuals and families
- some participants do not visit the parks often because the park site is too far from where they live

Park priorities:

- protecting, maintaining and restoring the parks (rather than adding new features)
- experiencing nature

- the parks are generally clean and well maintained
- being able to walk to the parks
- bike trails that go up the Credit River
- Community events, such as Woodhurst when music is played and a wide range of community members are out skating and enjoying themselves
- hiking and walking along the trails
- taking the dog for a walk along the trails
- seeing wildlife
- tobogganing hills
- trails that connect to each other
- fishing close to an urban setting all year round

Park improvements:

- extension of the trails in the parks to allow walkers/hikers to go for a longer period of time
- continuous bike trail and hiking trails between the parks
- nature focused children’s activities
- signage – interpretive and informational
- more winter activities, especially skating
- washrooms that are open all year round
- more washroom facilities
- more advanced, rugged trails
- playgrounds for children of all ages (very young and adolescence)
- splash pads for children
- more cross-country skiing and snowshoe trails
- more shelters and eating areas for barbequing and picnicking
- movable seating and picnic tables
- parks with better night security to combat vandalism
- off leash dog parks
- more garbage cans/recycling
- summer educational programs

3.4 Opportunities and Issues

Included in this section is a list of issues and opportunities that participants raised during “Places and Spaces” consultations. The list was produced by reviewing the comments received and selecting/summarizing what was heard with a focus on connects provided that were relevant to and consistent with the scope of the Credit River Parks Strategy. These points are very valuable to the process of generating the Strategy, as they represent the opinions and concerns of those who use the parks.

Opportunities:

- create a program for identifying park monitors/volunteers (with a badge or sash) who would act as “supervisors” or “park hosts” and who would encourage park users to follow park rules
- use signage to encourage and educate anglers about the need for proper maintenance and clean-up
- establish partnerships with UTM students, particularly with the various environmental organizations
- increase communication with residents to inform them about volunteer opportunities
- promote tobogganing to attract visitors from surrounding areas
- use the Internet to provide clear and accessible information on the Credit River Parks System for residents and visitors
- establish children’s nature programs/activities to educate them about the environment and encourage long-term stewardship
- put on a winter carnival similar to the one at the end of Tisdale Road near Port Credit
- promote recreational hockey or other sports to provide opportunities for building community and use of the Parks
- install fish cleaning stations in popular fishing areas in partnership with angling clubs
- use outdoor composting/recycling to achieve waste management and environmental goals
- establish business partnerships or sponsorships to improve aspects of the park without raising taxes
- use the capacity of volunteers; ensure that the opportunities to participate in volunteer activities are well advertised
- advertise/provide information on possible biking/hiking trips, i.e. where to park and where to take the trail; give day trip suggestions and sell it as an experience
- create a continuous path from Port Credit up to the 407

Issues:

- there are not enough serviced washrooms in the parks; some are only open in the summer time
- some people leave garbage around the park; teenagers leave beer bottles and garbage and fisherman leave fishing line on the riverbanks
- there are missing connections along some trails that force people to make unsafe crossings
- burglaries and vandalism are a problem in the vicinity of the skateboard park
- the bridge abutments between Dundas and Burnhamthorpe are in need of repair
- on some occasions there are not enough parking spaces – especially in the spring and summer at Erindale Park
- Grapevine acts like an invasive species in the areas around UTM and a mitigation strategy is required to control this plant
- Mississauga is growing rapidly – which could have an impact on the parks if they are not protected through proper planning
- the aging population will require special consideration in landscape design
- there is no plowing of the trails in the winter, which makes them difficult to use

- many UTM students don't realize their proximity to the Credit River Valley or utilize its amenities

3.5 Education and Engagement

The results of the “Places and Spaces” consultations provided the project team with valuable information on aspects of park use, user preferences, issues and opportunities. In addition to offering valuable feedback to inform the Strategy, the consultations worked to raise awareness within the community about the project and the Credit River in general. Continued education and engagement with park users and members of the general public will assist in ensuring the success of the CRPS over the long term and recommendations to guide a program of future outreach should be a component of the CRPS.

4 ONLINE SURVEY SUMMARY

4.1 Methodology

The Online Survey was another component of the community consultation program for the Credit River Parks Strategy. The survey was promoted in conjunction with the “Places and Spaces” strategy, allowing for engagement with an even broader audience and quantitative feedback from park users and the public-at-large.

Promotional survey cards were distributed at “Places and Spaces” events. The cards included a brief description of the survey and the City of Mississauga web address, where a link to the online survey could be found. The City of Mississauga’s email networks were also used to encourage stakeholders to fill-out the survey.

The survey was launched on Wednesday, December 22, 2010 at 4pm and closed February 22, 2011. It was open to anyone who wanted to fill out the survey questions. A total of 291 survey respondents filled out the survey over the two month period. The survey contained a total of 35 questions related to park use, knowledge of the study area, and priorities and other key pieces of information. The questions were broken down into 14 categories. The results of these questions are summarized below.

4.2 Demographics

Almost three-quarters (73%) of the survey respondents were from Mississauga. Others were from elsewhere in Peel Region (4%) or Ontario (23%).

Respondents represented a range of age groups, with fairly equal percentages of 19 to 34 year olds (30%), 35 to 49 year olds (35%) and 50 to 64 year olds (26%). Less than 10% were either over the age of 65 or under 18 years old.

Slightly more males (60%) than females (40%) filled out the survey.

4.3 Parks Use

It was most common for respondents to use the Credit River Parks between 2 and 6 times a year (32%). Other respondents used the park more frequently: between 1 and 3 times per month (28%), between 1 and 3 times per week (21%) or 4 or more times per week (23%).

The park that most respondents had visited was Erindale Park (82%). Riverwood and Streetsville Memorial Parks were also used frequently (63% and 60% respectively). Credit Meadows was the park that the least number of respondents had visited (37%).

The most common purpose for visiting the Credit River Parks study area was for ‘nature-based activity’ (59%) or physical activity (56%). Other popular reasons for visiting the parks include: ‘relaxation’ (44%), family outings’ (43%), or ‘general recreation’ (36%). The least popular reasons for visiting the Credit River Parks were for ‘organized team sports’ (5%), ‘water-based activities’ (13%) or ‘transportation’ (14%).

The most common reason for not having visited Credit River Parks was ‘lack of time’ (36%). ‘Other’ reasons were given by 42% of respondents. Some of the relevant answers included: “no knowledge of park existence”; “other parks nearer to me”; “would visit much more often if I could reach the trails by foot”.

Survey respondents indicated that they were generally happy with the level of maintenance in Credit River Parks; they thought maintenance was ‘good’ (65%) or average (25%). Some respondents provided other answers, such as “rain damage is rarely if ever repaired”; “see lots of garbage along the banks while fishing”; “walkway to the park from Ballyclare is often used by teenagers to party and their garbage, bottles, etc are left everywhere”; “seasonal variations”; “higher profile parks get better maintenance”.

When asked how long they would be willing to walk to use the facilities or features of the park, the most number of respondents indicated that it ‘10-15 minutes’ (27%). Another 21% said ‘it does not matter’.

Almost 95% of survey respondents answered that the parks were either ‘very important’ or ‘important’ to them. This indicates that those who filled out the survey are mostly people who care about and have a connection with the Credit River parks system. It can be assumed that the general public could have different views and express different values and priorities for the Credit River Parks.

4.4 Knowledge

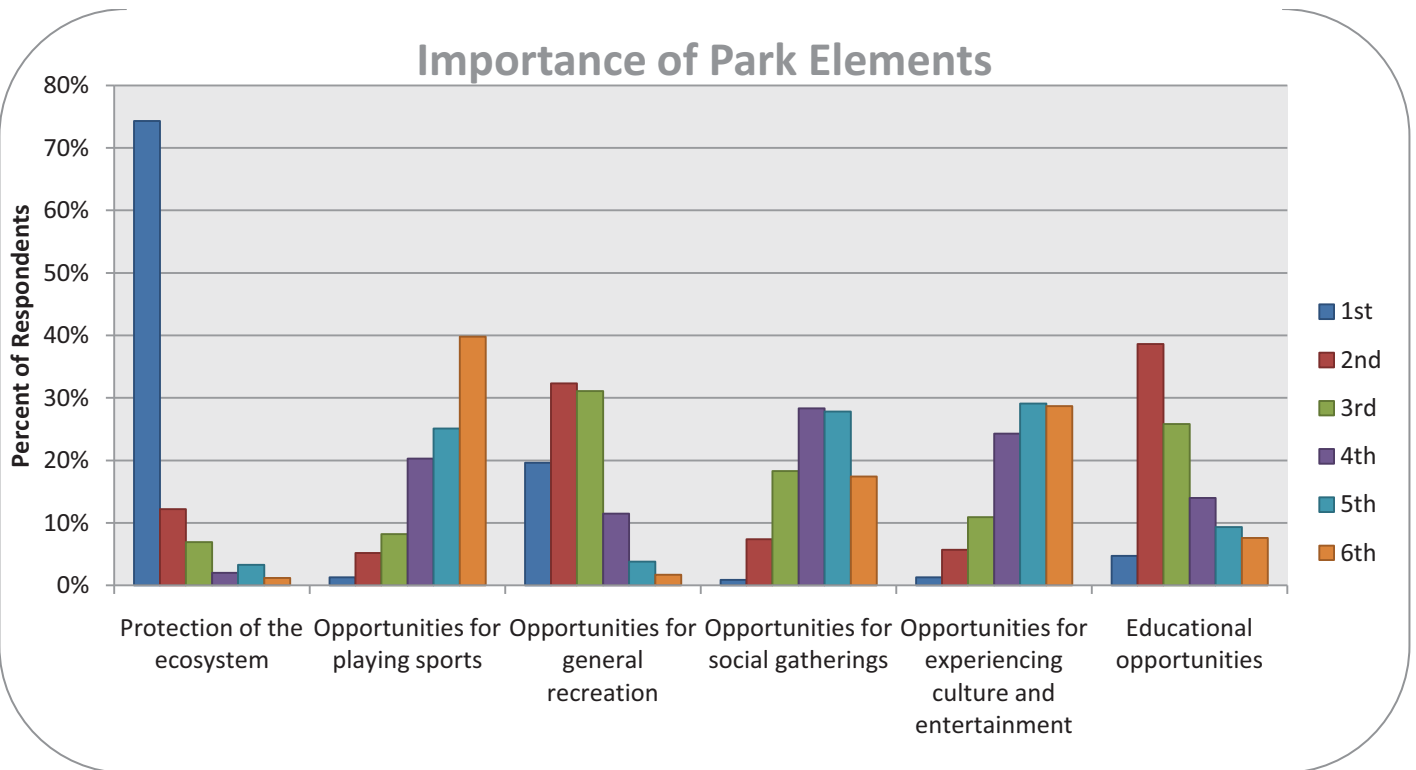
Respondents were asked about their understanding of various species at risk within the Credit River valley system, such as Northern Map Turtle, Butternut (tree), Redside Dace and American Eel. The most common answers for each species was either ‘not very aware’ or ‘don’t know’ indicating that there is a significant lack of knowledge when it comes to species at risk in Credit River Parks study area and thus there is an opportunity to enhance public education on this topic.

4.5 Park Priorities

This section of the survey asked participants to rank what they thought were the most important park elements in different categories. Ranking the various elements in order of importance helps to clearly identify park user’s priorities. In some cases, respondents indicated that ranking the elements was not appropriate because each was important in its own right. This was especially true with regards to natural elements. Many respondents took the opportunity to fill in the ‘other’ sections of the survey, providing additional answers, or comments.

The first question in this section asked respondents to rank of the importance of 6 elements of the Credit River Parks System. The chart below illustrates the results of this question, with each of the elements being ranked from most important (1st) to least important (6th). Almost three-quarters (73%) of survey respondents reported that ‘protection of the ecosystem’ was the most important (1st). ‘Opportunities for general recreation’ (32%) and ‘educational opportunities’ (39%) were the 2nd most important elements according to the greatest number of survey respondents. The greatest number of respondents said the least important park elements (6th) were ‘opportunities for playing sports’ (40%) and ‘opportunities for experiencing culture and entertainment’ (29%).

These answers suggest that the majority of the public would like the Credit River Parks Strategy to focus on protection of the natural environment and on providing recreational and educational opportunities, rather than providing opportunities for playing sports, experiencing culture or entertainment.



The greatest number of survey respondents said that the most important objectives (1st) related to the **natural elements** of the Credit River Parks are ‘protection of existing natural areas (such as

woodlots and wetland habitats)’ (55%) and ‘provide a continuous natural corridor/connect natural areas throughout the Valley’ (21%). The least important (6th) according to the majority is ‘to expand natural area size’ (38%). These results suggest that protection and restoration of current parks is more important to most park users than expanding the amount of greenspace. Several respondents indicated that each of the natural elements listed in this question are important and should not be ranked in terms of their importance.

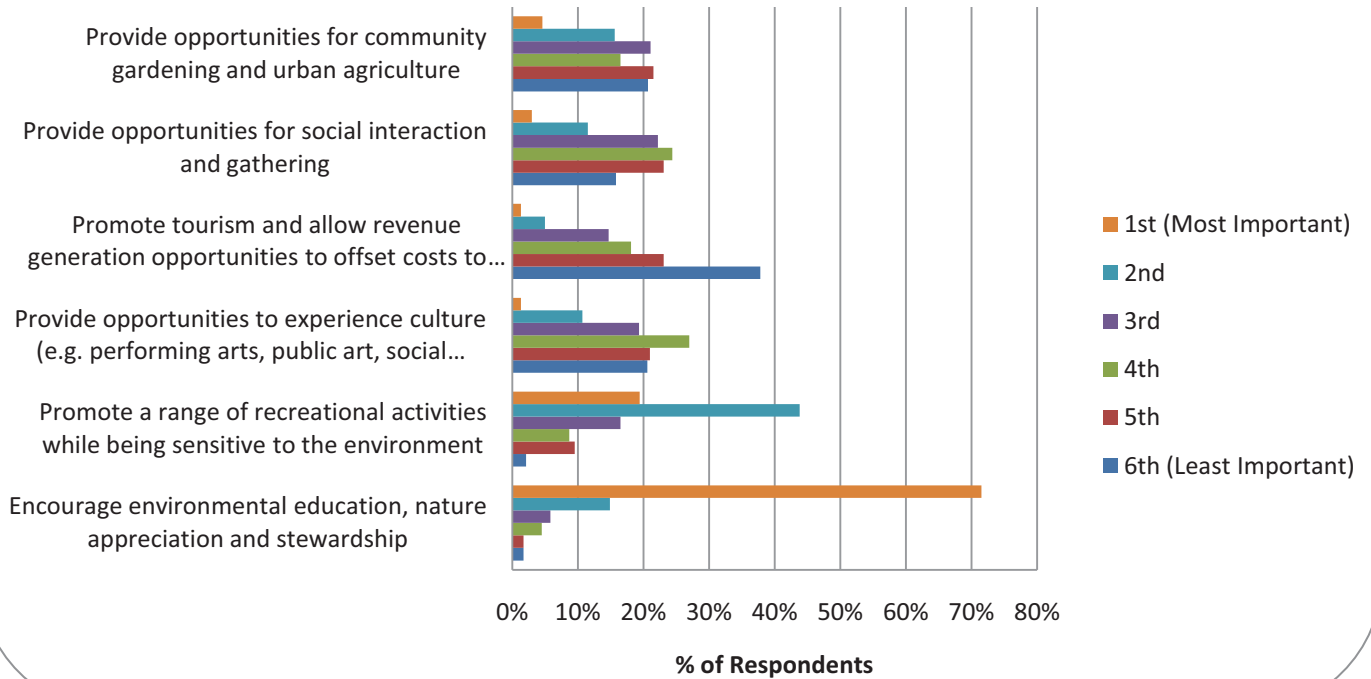
According to the greatest number of respondents, the most important initiative (1st) related to the **historical element** of the Credit River Parks is to ‘protect historically significant areas and landscapes’ (48%). The second (2nd) most important is to ‘raise public awareness of the history of the Credit River’ (22.3%). The least important historical element according to the majority (6th) is ‘restoration of old degraded historical structures and buildings’ (32%).

The most important **community element** of the Credit River Parks, according to the greatest number of survey respondents, is to ‘encourage environmental education, nature appreciation and stewardship’ (71.5%). The 2nd most important community element is ‘promote a range of recreational activities while being sensitive to the environment’ (44%). The least important elements according to the greatest number of respondents are to ‘promote tourism and allow revenue generation opportunities to offset costs to the community’ (39%) and ‘to provide opportunities for community gardening and urban agriculture’ (21%). These answers indicate that most park-users value community elements that are connected to the natural environment. They have identified an important opportunity for the Credit River Parks Strategy, which is to connect community and environmental elements and goals.

It is important to note that there were a range of answers for the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th most important community elements, demonstrating that there are a range of opinions that should be considered. For example, although 21% of respondents reported that ‘providing opportunities to experience culture’ was least important, there were also 21% who ranked this as 5th, 27% ranked this as 4th and 19% said it was the 2nd most important community element.

Some respondents identified issues with some of the community elements, such as the potential conflicts with gardening or urban agriculture and the park’s natural features and uses. Some people raised concerns about the effect of tourism and an increase in traffic within the park system, suggesting that if tourism progresses in the Parks, the public will need to be kept informed about the accompanying maintenance and management plans.

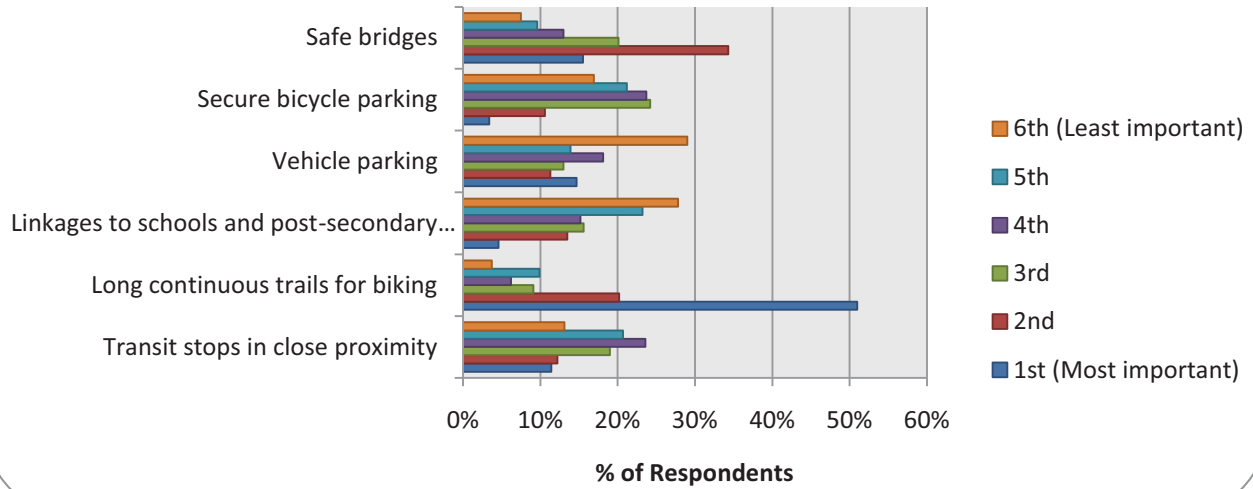
Importance of Community Elements



The greatest number of respondents (46%) reported that the most important (1st) **access and connection element** of the Credit River Parks is to ‘improve connection between various Credit River Parks’. There were a variety of answers provided for the ranking of 2nd; 22% said ‘provide better opportunities to access the river (i.e. boardwalks and shoreline improvements)’, 18% said ‘link park trails to local and regional roads’, 17% said ‘ensure that people of all physical abilities can access the Credit River Parks’. The greatest number of respondents said the least important element (6th) was ‘provide linkages between the Parks and schools and post-secondary institutions’ (28%). The ‘other’ responses indicated that some people have concerns about increasing access to the river because this is area is environmentally sensitive.

The most important **transportation element** according to 51% of respondents is ‘long continuous trails for biking’. ‘Safe bridges’ were the second (2nd) most important element according to the greatest number of respondents (34%); likely indicating that there are concerns amongst park users about the state of the existing bridges within the parks. The most common answers related to the least important elements (6th) are ‘vehicle parking’ (29%) and ‘linkages to schools and post-secondary educations’ (27%). Several respondents indicated that long-continuous trails for walking and hiking were also important transportation elements.

Importance of Transportation Elements

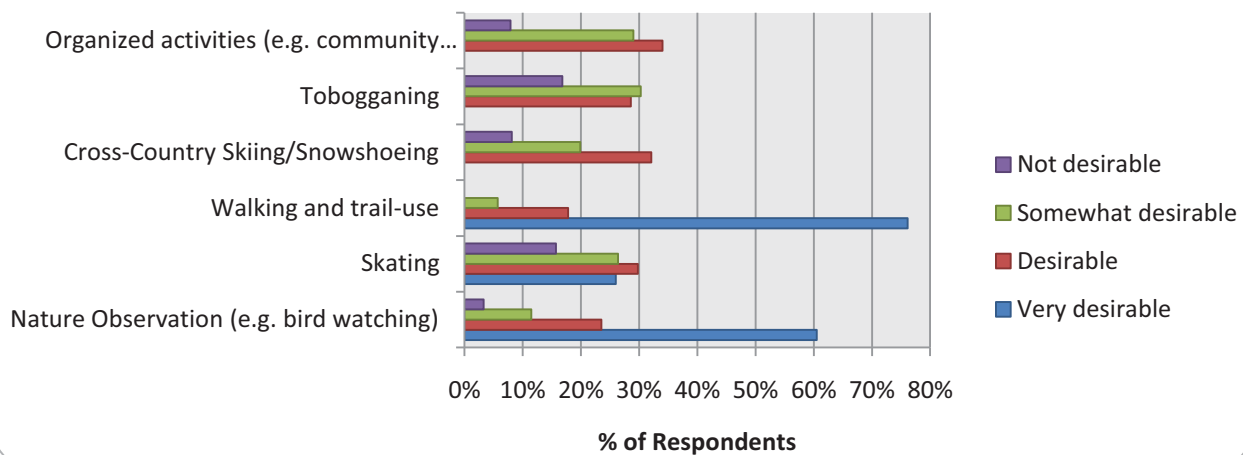


4.6 Winter and Summer Activities

Respondents were asked to rank the desirability of various types of winter and summer activities in the Credit River. The responses demonstrate that there is a strong desire for certain types of activities in the Credit River valley, while other activities are strongly opposed. More specifically, the majority of park users desire nature-based activities that protect natural environment and/or that do not interfere with conservation and ecological objectives.

The **winter activities** that were ‘very desirable’ to most respondents include: ‘walking and trail-use’ (76%), nature observation (61%) and cross-country skiing/snowshoeing (36%). ‘Tobogganing’ and ‘skating’ were the most common activities to be rated as ‘undesirable’ (30% and 29% respectively).

Winter Activity Priorities



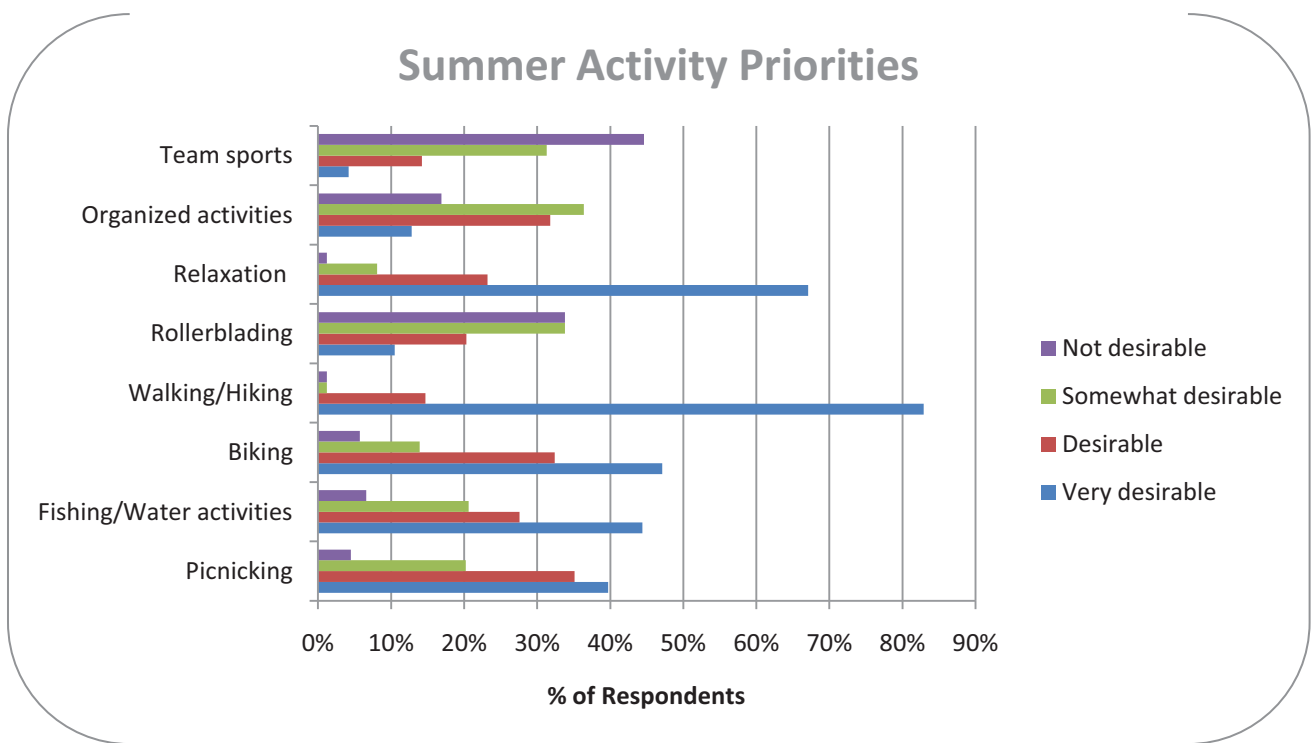
In the ‘others’ section, many respondents indicated that ‘fishing’ was the most desirable winter activity. Some respondents indicated potential issues with skating and maintenance of ice.

The most desirable **summer activities**, according to the survey results are ‘walking and hiking’ (83% said very desirable). Other ‘very desirable’ activities according to respondents are ‘relaxation’ (67%), ‘fishing/water activities’ (47%), ‘biking (cycling or mountain biking)’ (47%), and ‘picnicking’ (40%).

‘Team sports’ (45%) and ‘rollerblading’ (34%) were commonly recognized as ‘not desirable’.

Respondents reported that the problem with rollerblading is that it requires paved trails, which can interfere with the park’s ecology. Other issues raised in this question include: the need to accompany picnicking with proper waste disposal facilities and litter management; that mountain biking might be too destructive; and that entertainment events can create a lot of garbage and damage the park.

Some of the other summer activities suggested by survey respondents include: fishing, running, kayaking, astronomy, night hikes, photography, white-water boating.



4.7 Youth Activities

According to the survey respondents, the most desirable youth-related elements are ‘playgrounds’ (35%), ‘children’s gardens’ (35%) and ‘nature discovery theme parks’ (48%). The most undesirable park elements are ‘small petting zoo’ (48%) and ‘splash pads’ (27.2%). There were

however 70% of respondents who thought that splash pads were very desirable, desirable or somewhat desirable.

Consultation with youth specifically could provide a better indication of the types of activities and elements youth themselves would like to see in the parks.

It was suggested several times that these types of facilities should be located in other parks in Mississauga, but not near the Credit River. Several respondents also commented on the need to use of sustainable materials and limit park infrastructure.

Other youth-related activities suggested included: “naturalization programs”, “outdoor education”, “seasonal discovery hikes”, and “fishing”.

4.8 Passive Recreation

Survey respondents have a strong desire for passive recreation in the Credit River Parks. Most of the passive recreation elements were rated as ‘very desirable’: walking/hiking (85%), nature observation (74%), relaxing/quiet time (77%), and picnicking (40%).

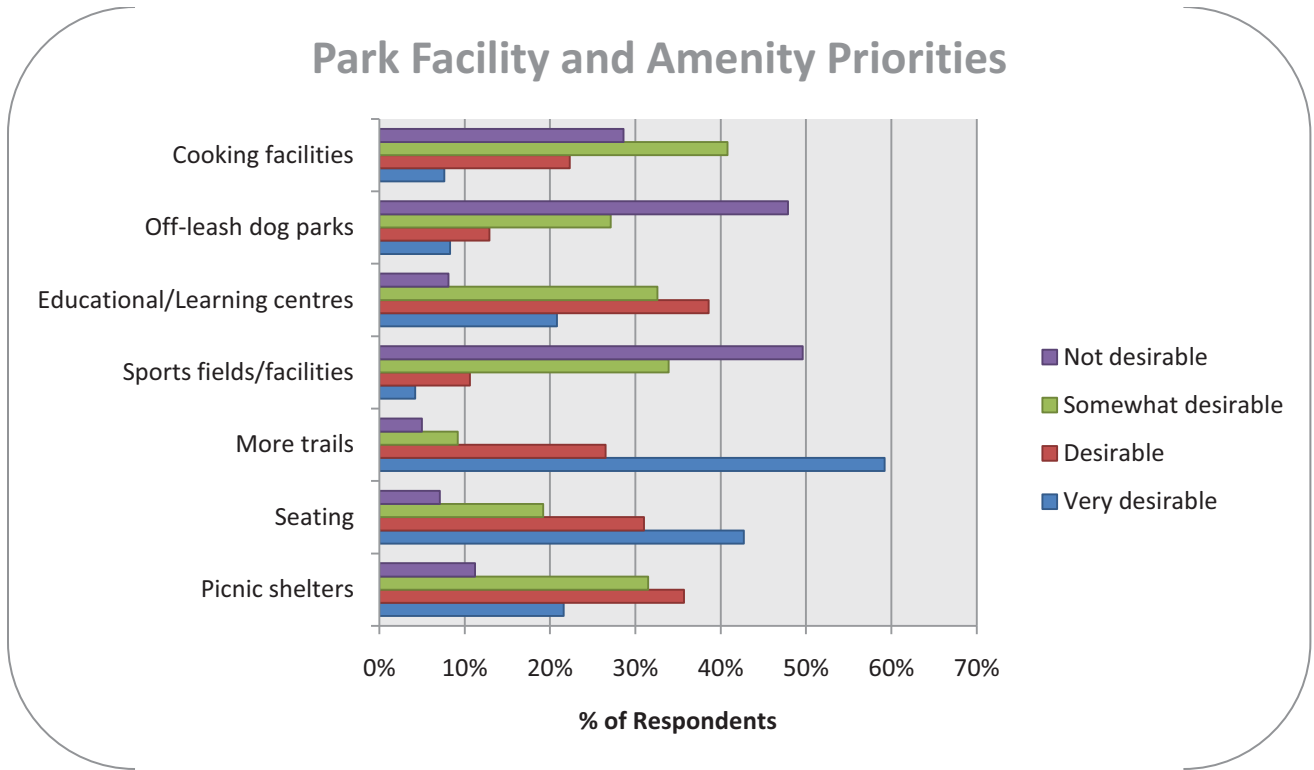
Watching performances was rated less desirable than the other elements. Comments were made regarding the negative impacts of large gathering and/or the need to keep them low-impact. Other passive recreational activities suggested include: fishing (4%) and dog-walking/off leash dog parks (1%).

4.9 Park Facilities and Amenities

The park facilities and amenities that were determined to be on most desirable were: ‘more trails’ and ‘seating’. More than half of respondents indicated that more trails were ‘very desirable’ and 26.5% said that this was desirable. For seating, 43% said that it was very desirable, and 31% said it was desirable. ‘Educational and learning centres’ (36%) and picnic facilities (39%) were identified as ‘desirable’ to 36% and 39% of respondents respectively, demonstrating that they are also desired park facilities.

‘Sports fields and facilities’ (50%) and ‘off-leash dog areas’ (48%) were most commonly indicated as ‘not desirable’.

Concerns and issues raised in conjunction with this question include: the need to limit trails (especially paved trails), problems with dogs in parks – such as people not picking up waste and run-off and the incompatibility of sports fields.



4.10 Park Services

Many of the options provided with this question were determined to be undesirable to survey respondents. For example, 39% of respondents said cafes were undesirable and 39% said concession stands were undesirable. Equipment rentals and event bookings were considered somewhat desirable by the highest number of respondents.

The most desirable park services, according respondents, are washrooms; 51% of respondents said that they were ‘very desirable’. This indicates that there is a strong need for more washrooms in Credit River Parks system.

Some additional comments were made, specifically about information centres. One comment was that information centres are largely being replaced by the Internet as sources of information. Other would like information centres to be more interpretive or connected to history.

4.11 Entertainment and Culture

The survey results suggest that there is a general lack of desirability for most types of culture and entertainment in Credit River Parks. ‘Sporting events’ (48%) and ‘markets’ (40%) were most commonly indicated as undesirable. Several respondents raised concerns about the impacts of these cultural events on elements on the natural features and ecology of the park system.

‘Fundraising or volunteer events’ were the most attractive entertainment and culture elements; one-third (33%) of respondents said that they were desirable.

‘Festivals’ (37%), ‘performances’ (36%) and ‘art installations’ (31%) were somewhat desirable according to the greatest number of respondents. These are elements that can be incorporated

into the park without compromising the natural heritage elements; they would need to be accompanied by additional procedures/practices.

Other suggestions include: “using native art”, “wind or water-based art installations” and “hosting fishing derbies”.

3.12 Education and Interpretation

More than three-quarters (77%) of respondents indicated that ‘signage’ was either desirable or very desirable. ‘Educational centres (41%), interactive opportunities (38%) and historical buildings/museums (31%) were most commonly ranked as desirable. Commemorative sculpture was the most common ‘undesirable’ element (27%).

4.13 Trail Types

Respondents offered a range of opinions when it came to trail types. ‘All natural’ trails and ‘a combination’ were considered very desirable by 43% and 48% respectively.

‘Gravel’ and ‘accessible for strollers and wheelchairs’ were also attractive trail types; 40% and 35% (respectively) of respondents reported that these were ‘desirable’.

Paved trails were undesirable to 36% of the population. They were however somewhat desirable (28.5%) or desirable (18.9%) of the survey population. This suggests that despite the fact that the majority of park users oppose paved trails, there are still some who appreciate and value this type of trail place in the Parks system.

4.14 Gardens

Almost three-quarters (71%) of survey respondents indicated that ‘Natural habitat/native plant gardens’ are very desirable types of gardens. For ‘urban agriculture’ and ‘community gardens’ the greatest number of respondents said they were somewhat desirable (32.3% and 28.4% respectively). Formal gardens were the least desirable type of garden, with 44% reporting that they were not desirable.

Generally, respondents indicated that that the choice of gardens needs to be appropriate to ecological context. Respondents stated that gardens require maintenance and therefore would need to be coupled with an increase in park staff. There was an interest in community gardens and urban agriculture, however there were also concerns raised in the other section about the potential conflicts with environmental park goals. Formal gardens were strongly opposed because they take up green space, require pesticides and are not natural. Several people indicated that there is room for all of the types of gardens in the Credit River Parks.

4.15 Landscape Design

‘Natural’ landscape design is by far the most desirable according to survey respondents; 88% said this was ‘very desirable’. ‘Restorative’ design was also commonly ‘very desirable’ (44.8%). Formal design was again most commonly indicated as ‘undesirable’ (47%) or ‘somewhat’ desirable to (32.1%) of respondents. Others suggestions for landscape design include

“naturalized landscaping around parking lots”, and the “formal landscapes should be limited to Riverwood Park”.

4.16 Public Outreach Preferences

More than half of respondents (57%) indicated that they would like to be contacted about future meetings, focus groups, or initiatives for Credit River Parks. Those who did (140 people) provided their name, phone number and/or email address.

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their interest in continuing to be involved in the Credit River Parks strategy. The majority of respondents said they would be interested in joining a Credit River parks group to support stewardship and enhancement; 20% ‘very likely’, 26% were ‘likely’ and 26% were ‘somewhat likely’ to join.

‘Website’ (64%) and ‘email’ (61%) were the most common methods that respondents would like used to remain informed about Credit River Parks initiatives. Approximately one-third of respondents said that ‘community newsletters’ (31%) or ‘newspaper’ (30%) would be preferred. Other suggestions include: “bulletin boards and signage”; “telephone” and “directly from city staff council”.

4.17 Other Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to answer 2 open ended questions. The following is a list of the most common and relevant responses to this question. An asterix (*) indicates the number of additional times a comment was made (one asterix (*) per comment). Note that the comments noted in this section are not verbatim.

- The focus of the Strategy should be protection of the natural environment.*****
- I appreciate that the public is being given the opportunity to contribute.*****
- Use minimal infrastructure; keep the parks natural.*****
- Sports facilities and activities are not meant for Credit River Parks.*****
- Preserve and enhance natural areas and habitats.****
- Be careful not to allow monetary gain or commercial influences to enter the parks.***
- Increasing human traffic in the Parks can create more garbage or damage to the parks.**
- Linkage of the parks to each other is most important.**
- The community aspects of the Parks are important.**
- Fishing should have been more of a concern on the survey’s list of recreational activities.**
- I enjoyed the survey.**
- Wildlife is the most important park element.*
- Stronger policies, legislation to protect and enhance the Credit River Parks are needed.
- The strategy should have more consideration for the river, since it is the heart of the system.*
- I am thankful the City is undertaking this initiative.*

- There needs to be more information accessible to the public regarding the parks.* For instance, Riverwood is a beautiful park and not a lot of people know that it is open to the public.
- The Parks are critical to citizen's health.
- Do not make decisions about the Strategy behind closed doors.
- Developing and clearing additional land along the Credit River should be banned.
- Clean out the old pond; it was a place to watch the Blue Herons do their feeding.
- The vistas and views of the Parks are important elements.
- There is a large mountain biking community in Mississauga. It would be very beneficial in many aspects to build and maintain a series of bike-only trails. Use the Bruce Trail System as a model for securing permission on private lands for linkage/access.
- Protection of fish habitat is important.
- There should also be education element to encourage appreciation of the parks and its natural area.
- The strategy should recognize people as one player in a larger natural system.
- The strategy should establish opportunities to teach people about the parks.
- Parks are important for teenagers - for outdoor activity and to get away from commercial and digital worlds.
- There should be more focus on stream rehab for the fishery.
- The parks need to incorporate more winter activities; see urban parks in Finland, Sweden and Norway for ideas.
- Water quality is very important.
- There was only minimal mention of First Nations/Aboriginal peoples here, however it is a key element of what should be interpreted and shared along the Credit River.
- The fisheries for Atlantic salmon and Steelhead need to be recognized and protected.
- There needs to be more spots for parking cars when fishing.
- The parks should incorporate more benches for our seniors.
- They survey concentrated too much on activities and facilities.
- There should be no paved trails in the parks.
- Work to limit goose nuisance.
- Change the name to Credit River Strategy. The word parks steers the vision to one of utility rather than to its best and highest use as a continuous natural oasis that Mississauga sorely lacks.
- There is room in the park system to accommodate a variety of options.
- There should be a fixed time schedule for the implementation of the Strategy.
- The design of the VAM building with its use of passive solar, should be considered as a best practice for design.
- Each park should be different.
- Riverwood could use a playground or play structures for kids but more like natural playground - wooden steps, or ladders to fit the natural setting.
- The Parks should have marked trails designed in different length loops

- It would be nice to see the material displayed and comments received at the workshops posted on the Parks and Recreation website.

The second open-ended question asked respondents to “imagine the Credit River Parks system, or one park in the system, 20 - 25 years from now” – and to list the elements they would like it to have. The responses to this question are largely a reiteration of the other sections of the survey.

5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The “Places and Spaces” program and Online Survey provided good feedback that will inform the development of the Credit River Parks Strategy. Opinions were gained from a broad range of park users from Mississauga and around Ontario.

From both the survey and “Places and Spaces” events, the input received indicates a strong preference towards nature experiences, natural design and protection of the environment. New activities, programs and tourism related initiatives will need to be accompanied but well thought-out management, planning and mitigation strategies to ensure protection of natural heritage features and functions. The public will need to be informed about these practices through ongoing outreach and consultation.

The results of both the “Places and Spaces” and the survey identified a strong connection between the community and environment goals. Engagement, education, and stewardship in conjunction with the natural heritage protection, restoration and enhancement are desired by park users. These considerations should also be key elements of the study process and implementation plan for the CRPS.